

REMARKS

In the Office Action of June 5, 2003, the Examiner rejected all pending claims under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over various combinations of references, including McGillis et al (U.S. Patent No. 2,569,110), McGillis et al (U.S. Patent No. 3,078,867), McGillis (U.S. Patent No. 3,963,041), Scaramucci (U.S. Patent No. 4,860,790), and Gallier (France Document No. 2,355,736).

In this Amendment, applicants have cancelled and rewritten all pending claims to place them in more typical U.S. format. Claim 12 is the only currently independent claim. Claim 12 corresponds substantially to the subject matter of now cancelled claim 11. Claims 13-19 correspond substantially to now cancelled claims 2-8. Claims 20-22 recite additional particular features not expressly recited in the original-pending claims.

Applicants respectfully submit that the subject matter of claim 12 is patentable over the cited references. Claim 12 recites a level limit valve for the fuel tank of a motor vehicle including, for example, a valve body, a carrier, a flap, a float, and a lever rod connecting the flap and float. The float is also pivotally connected to the carrier by a linkage separate from the lever rod. A central axis of the valve body and a pivot axis of the flap both also run in an essentially horizontal direction. The carrier includes a centrally located opening through which the lever rod extends to connect the flap and float. Applicants respectfully submit that the cited references do not disclose this recited subject matter.

For example, none of the cited references disclose or suggest an arrangement including the recited horizontal relationships. Instead, each of the cited references discloses arrangements wherein the valve body extends vertically, rather than horizontally, as claimed.

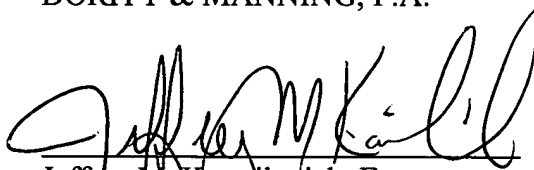
Also, none of the references discloses the arrangement whereby the float is connectable to the carrier via a linkage and is connected to the flap via a lever rod separate from the linkage and extending through an opening in the carrier. A close examination of the McGillis and McGillis et al references shows that, even if one were to accept the items identified by the Examiner as comprising the lever rod, no such linkage connecting the float to the carrier is disclosed or suggested by any of these references. (Dependent claims 20-22 set forth further additional limitations regarding these relationships also respectfully submitted not to be found within the cited references).

Applicants respectfully no prima facie case for obviousness has been made out for claim 12, as presented above. Applicants therefore respectfully request reconsideration and reexamination of the present application and timely allowance of all pending claims.

The Examiner is encouraged to call the undersigned at his convenience to resolve any remaining issues.

Respectfully submitted,

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